

Statement to the United States Senate

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Mr. Chairman, Mr. Vice Chairman, members of the Committee, I am honored to come before you today as the President's nominee to be the first Senate-confirmed Director of the National Counterterrorism Center. This new agency is a central element of Congress's plan to strengthen US intelligence capabilities and to mobilize all government agencies in the war on terrorism. I am fully cognizant of the immensity and the importance of the duties I have been called upon to assume. If confirmed, my pledge to you is that I will carry out the mission of the NCTC with determination, with integrity, and to the very best of my ability.

In appearing before you today, I am mindful of a silent constituency: The victims of 9/11, the soldiers and civilians killed in Iraq, the sailors killed on the USS Cole, the airmen who died at Khobar Towers, those who died at the hand of terrorists at our embassies in Africa, the dead in Lebanon, Madrid, and most recently, in London. There are many others, and it is the grim nature of war that these numbers will surely grow. Nonetheless, it will be the mission of the NCTC to do everything in its power to stop each and every attack. Our national objective is difficult but straightforward. It is to destroy terrorist networks far and wide and to render terrorism ineffectual and self-defeating as a tactic, even for fanatics.

I come before you today after a career of nearly 40 years in service to the Nation. You will be the judge of my qualifications, but I believe my years of service have prepared me for this responsibility in several important ways.

First, I have been deeply involved in national security matters all of my adult life. I have been privileged to hold positions of responsibility for the most sensitive activities of the U.S. Government. I have participated extensively in the deliberations of the National Security Council in both Democratic and Republican administrations. Before my retirement after 36 years of active-duty military service, I served as Director of Strategic Plans and Policy for the Joint Chiefs of Staff, leading the development of the National Military Strategy.

Second, Terrorism is not an abstract concept to me. I have lived and operated under the threat of terrorists. Nine years ago, I heard and felt the blast from Khobar Towers while standing thirty miles away in Bahrain. Elements of my command were among the first to respond. Last year I served briefly in Baghdad as Ambassador Bremer's Deputy in the Coalition Provisional Authority with up-close responsibility for civilian operations under siege by terrorists.

Third, the National Counterterrorism Center is itself a product of a changing world landscape, and my experience has prepared me to lead in an environment of strategic transition. I have been involved in the adaptation and reform of government institutions in diverse settings and circumstances. I had extensive joint military experience before the Goldwater Nichols Act made joint duty what it should be. In response to evolving threats to our vital national interests, I had the privilege to propose, promote, commission and command the FIFTH Fleet in the Middle East

– the Navy’s only new fleet since the World War II era. In the private sector, I was the Chief Executive Officer of a high-tech education company, where I experienced firsthand the challenges and rewards of reforming another culture, public education. Most recently, I served as Executive Director of the Presidential WMD Commission whose report is now the President’s blueprint for reform of the Intelligence Community.

Overall, I believe my most important experience is that of leadership, developed at the helm of over a dozen operating organizations as a Commander, a Chief Executive officer or a Chief Operating Officer. Foremost among those experiences has been my service in the United States Military. I have commanded eight military organizations, all of which were in the business of conducting operations at the tip of the spear. Those were my most personally rewarding tours of duty and the most formative of my professional character. As if no time had passed, my heart remains with those who serve on the front lines today.

If confirmed, I will draw upon all of the leadership skills, experience and judgment that I have garnered over the years.

That summarizes my view of my qualifications. I will now move briefly to a few thoughts on the way ahead.

First, people are key to our success. As is the case with any government leader, my job performance will depend upon the performance of a thousand others. In my short time at the NCTC as well as over the last year with the WMD Commission, I have been impressed by the dedication, professionalism, and patriotism of the members of the Intelligence Community. If confirmed, I will build on the existing foundation and cultivate a culture within the NCTC and the larger counterterrorism community where every individual is encouraged to give his or her utmost and is honored to serve as a member of the team. I will place exceptional value on collaboration and teamwork. We are at war. The buddy system will be in force.

As in all positions of this nature, there will be more to do than is humanly possible. An important part of my leadership will be setting priorities. While there are many challenges ahead, bridging what has traditionally been referred to as foreign and domestic intelligence will be one of my top priorities. That means forging and strengthening strong alliances with the Department of Homeland Security and the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Both of these sister agencies are charting new territory in the area of counterterrorism. Both are struggling with unprecedented demands for intelligence, application of new policy and legal provisions in respect to US persons, and construction of a modern information sharing architecture. Under direction from Ambassador Negroponte, I will lead a coherent, government-wide approach to these challenges. I will invoke his full authorities, and those that repose in me as Director of the National Counterterrorism Center, to manage intelligence for counterterrorism across the government as a single enterprise.

I look forward to working with an invigorated foreign intelligence community. In particular, the CIA’s Counterterrorism Center has for a number of years been a center of excellence. With little public recognition of their successes, the staff of CTC works tirelessly every day to save lives. If

confirmed, I will work with the Director of CIA to ensure that NCTC works hand-in-glove with CTC for the good of the Nation.

At the top level, the NCTC has two broad functions: Intelligence and Strategic Operational Planning. The first, and more established function resides within the world of intelligence – understanding the terrorist enemy, his objectives, his support networks, and his actions. The second and more uncharted function relates to our government-wide operations against that enemy. Specifically, it involves strategic operational planning to bring all the instruments of national power to bear against the enemy.

With respect to intelligence, a central role of the NCTC is to integrate, exploit, and disseminate all proper sources of information on international terrorism. Our goal will be to expose the networks of international terrorism, and to identify and hunt down its perpetrators. We will cast the net far and wide. Those who knowingly put money in the hands of terrorists, or who provide refuge or other support, are no less our enemies than those who strap-on the bombs. In this foundational mission, the Director of the National Counterterrorism Center is a key member of the US Intelligence Community and a direct subordinate of the Director of National Intelligence. I have known John Negroponte for twenty years and appear before you with his full support.

In addition to tactical and operational intelligence, we must also take the long view. If confirmed, I will place greater emphasis on long term, in-depth analysis. The counterterrorism strategy of the United States should be grounded on a thorough understanding of our adversaries. We need to understand the political, cultural, and social forces that turn teenagers into indiscriminate assassins. This context is highly differentiated in different regions and countries. An understanding of events in the Middle East cannot be automatically transposed to Africa or Southeast Asia. Without relenting in the real-time hunt for individual terrorists, the United States needs a long-term strategy that addresses the roots of terrorism and that is based upon a genuine understanding of its causes and antecedents.

The intelligence-gathering and dissemination role of the NCTC is replete with opportunities, and with pitfalls. Many of the opportunities are technology-driven. Information technology has great potential to enhance almost every aspect of intelligence operations, from collection and data integration to analysis and dissemination of finished intelligence. To realize this potential will require sustained excellence and innovation, along with rapid migration from the research laboratory to the battlefield. The NCTC will be the hub of an intelligence network that goes far beyond the traditional US intelligence community. The network will extend to all agencies of the federal government, to state and local governments and law enforcement agencies, to the private sector, and to liaison elements of foreign countries.

The challenges of information sharing on this scale are well-known. However, as evidenced in the studies of the WMD Commission, building the requisite technology infrastructure will be less formidable than the task of rationalizing the disparate rules and policies that overlay the information sharing environment. Many of these rules and policies are vestiges of the cold war while others represent bureaucratic inertia. If confirmed, I will work relentlessly to overcome

these and other obstacles. The goal is simple: to make sure the right people have the right information at the right time.

The application of information dominance in the war on terrorism must be bounded to protect the values we are fighting for. The rights of privacy and free expression are at the core of American civil liberties. These fundamental protections would be placed in jeopardy by unrestrained collection and exploitation of personal data. Congress has attended to this concern in new legislation by creation of a Civil Liberties Board to oversee all US intelligence activities. It will be my responsibility to work closely and cooperatively with this Board, as well as the DNI's Civil Liberties Protection Officer, in the counterterrorism arena. More to the point, it will be my responsibility, irrespective of external civil liberties oversight, to be vigilant in protection of American civil liberties in every aspect of the work of the National Counterterrorism Center. There is no victory in the apprehension of terrorists if it is done at the expense of principles embodied in our Constitution and Bill of Rights.

The second major mission of the NCTC is Strategic Operational Planning. This is a new mission defined and assigned by the President and the Congress in direct response to the terrorist threat. Indeed, the legislation that established the National Counterterrorism Center is a landmark in the history of the US Government. Congress has vested an unprecedented concentration of responsibilities in a new institution with a vital, highly focused, and unrelenting mission. Reporting to the President, the Director of the National Counterterrorism Center is called upon by law to plan the employment of "all instruments of national power." He or she is charged to orchestrate, by "strategic operational planning," what amounts to a perpetual assault by the United States of America on terrorism and terrorists wherever and whenever they threaten our national interests. Inherent in this job is the monumental task of planning, coordinating and leveraging the counterterrorism work of all agencies of the Federal Government to achieve synergy and maximum effect. This responsibility could not be more daunting nor more necessary. If confirmed, I will concentrate the Center's full energy and capabilities to ensure that this new mission is swiftly developed, functional and effective.

Further, let me add a word about our shared responsibilities. I have spent most of my adult life in the U.S. Navy, where the Captain of the Ship serves as the prototype of responsibility and accountability. I expect to be held accountable. But responsibility and accountability have a third, inseparable companion. That companion is authority. Meaningful accountability requires authorities commensurate with assigned responsibilities. I will put the new authorities of the Director of the National Counterterrorism Center to the test. If need be, where I lack authority within my area of responsibility, I will seek it from the DNI or from the President. It may be that, if new statutory authorities are unclear, or if they engender conflicting interpretations, I will return to this body to request additional powers required for the NCTC to fulfill its mission. That said, my initial inclination is that the authorities are sufficient.

In the same vein, as a definitional matter, I may be called a "political appointee," but there is nothing political about this job. Every citizen of the United States, irrespective of political affiliation, indeed every person anywhere in the world who holds to basic humanitarian principles, has a stake in the success of the National Counterterrorism Center. Although it would

be foolish not to expect detractors and critics, I firmly believe that the overwhelming majority of Americans hope for success of the NCTC. I intend to draw upon these shared values and good will, especially in my dealings with the Congress of the United States. Whatever differences may exist in approach or emphasis, I believe we are in lockstep on the desired result. I intend to preserve this relationship through candor, honesty and integrity in working with the United States Senate and House of Representatives.

To succeed, we must recognize the nature of the conflict we are engaged in. I believe it is correctly characterized as a war, but there are differences from historical wars. As with most wars, there will be many battles. But in the war on terrorism, our victories in battle will in most cases be invisible or opaque to the vast majority of the public, while our defeats will be painfully obvious. We will do everything in our power to win every battle, but we must also recognize that losing a battle, should that occur, cannot be allowed to weaken our resolve to win the war.

I began my remarks by acknowledging the silent witnesses who have been victims of terror. I will finish by noting another constituency. I am a father of three and grandfather of four. It is likely that the war we are fighting against terrorism will continue well into their lifetime. Without question, the conduct and outcome of this war on terrorism will shape the character and quality of their lives and, indeed, our entire civilization. I have no need for other motivation. By accepting this call to duty, I will be defending everything that I hold dear. With due humility in respect to the magnitude of the challenge, I am ready to launch, and, by God's grace, determined to prevail. Thank you.